

Connect

supporting student participation

**Number 118:
August 1999**



Schools for Democracy: Rhetoric ... Reality?

*Also
in
this
issue:*

- Student Networking: Why Is It Important?
- JSCs, Junior Councils, Student Leadership:
Preston South PS, Mooroopna Park PS, Wangaratta, Emmaus College
- Youth Involvement in Policy-Making:
Lessons from Ontario School Boards
- Second National Youth Reconciliation Convention
26 September - 2 October
- 1999 Young Leaders' Forum
20-24 September
- Resources:
'You Are Not Alone', 'Being Fair'; Grants, Medals, Conferences

& Incorporating the PASTA Newsletter #13

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This Issue

Way back in February 1996, the front page of *Connect* # 97 highlighted a comment from David Owen (Centre for Citizenship Education at the University of Tasmania) that: "it is how we run our schools, rather than what we teach in them, that will determine levels of active citizenship..." Reflecting on moves to encourage Civics and Citizenship Education in primary and secondary schools across Australia, Owen went on to say: "Changing curricula is difficult enough; developing genuinely inclusive and democratic systems of school governance even more so."

It is now interesting to note similar sentiments (but with a higher degree of optimism) being reported internationally. In this issue, Derry Hannam (from a background as a School Inspector in Britain), reflects on movements within Europe towards policies that encourage and support active participation of students in school governance.

In a later talk (presented at Summerhill, July 1999) Hannam argues that "there is an emerging consensus that schools should become significantly more democratic than they commonly are if they are to effectively educate for democracy and human rights." He points out that until 1998, the UK, Malta and Ireland were the only states in Western and Central Europe not to have statutory requirements for a student representative body and some participation in wider school decision making at least in secondary schools. Since then, the Irish Education Act has been passed, which demands that school boards of management 'facilitate the involvement of the students in the operation of the school', 'encourage the establishment by students of a student council' and 'facilitate and give all reasonable assistance to students who wish to establish a student council and student councils when they have been established.' In March 1999, Malta hosted a seminar on 'Democracy In, For and Through School' and planned projects that could lead to future legislation.

Elsewhere in this issue, the Canadian Institute on Governance provides a Policy Briefing Paper on the role of student trustees on Ontario School Boards, and recommends a number of improvements in the legislation and in the operation of such participation. "School boards need to recognise student participation as a resource rather than a threat," the paper notes.

Where does Australia stand on such matters?

The current focus on Civics and Citizenship Education in Australian schools, particularly through the *Discovering Democracy* materials, can provide many opportunities for school-level developments in both governance and curriculum - in order to recognise and support the active citizenship of young people.

We still eagerly await the responses of education systems to international recognition that they, themselves, need to display increased democratic responsibility!

Roger Holdsworth

NEXT ISSUE: #119 - October 1999

Deadline for material: end of September

why? student networking

What is a Student Network?

A Student Network exists when students from two or more schools (SRCs, Student Councils, JSCs) get together around shared needs and interests. It can be a formal network - meetings or conferences - or an informal network with casual contacts and shared resources. It can be local, regional, statewide or national.

Why is networking important?

Here are some ideas suggested by students and others:

Sharing Resources

Students can share information (eg group constitutions, publications, meeting procedures) and physical resources - and this will help each group operate better.

Learning How

Information can be gained (often best in face-to-face discussions) from other students about **how** to make decisions, how to take part in school committees, how to organise things and so on.

Reflecting Together

Students learn about making their Student Councils better by reflecting on and thinking about what they have done.

Other students can help this process: 'we are not alone';

'we found that too'; 'that's different to what happened to us'; 'because' ...

Supporting Each Other

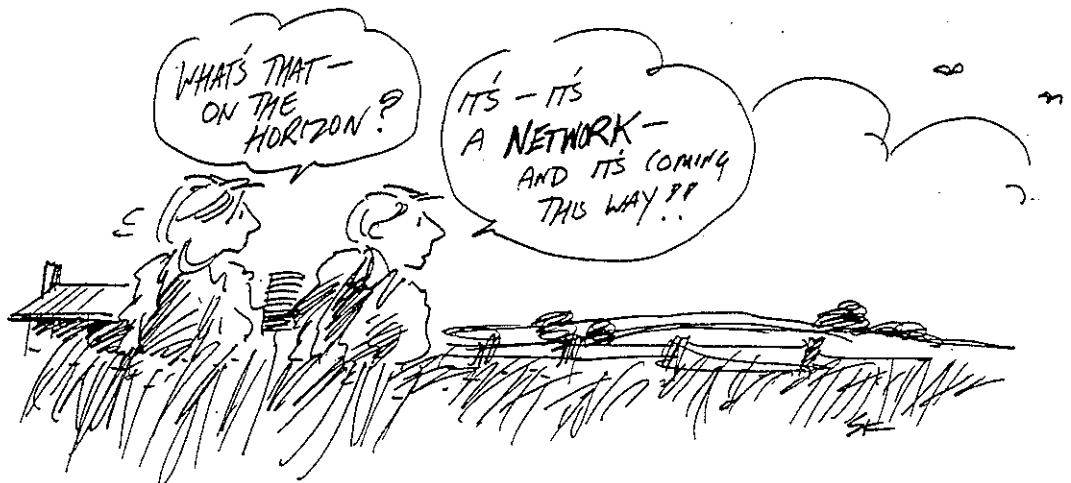
When students and student groups are having problems - in being heard, in getting things organised, in keeping focused, in getting motivated - other students can help with encouragement or advice or visits or ideas or letters or phone calls or ...

Learning About What's Possible

Student groups can 'get in a rut' and be limited by what they've done or thought about in the past. They might dismiss some things as 'impossible' because they've never tried them! Hearing from other schools can 'shake up' a student group and encourage it to think of new possibilities.

Influencing Policy

Education decisions that affect schools are often made outside the school - they are the bigger issues within which individual schools operate. If students want to have an influence over these policies, they need to be represented at the levels at which they are made - regional, statewide, national etc.



Efficient Training

A training day shared between representatives from several schools can be an efficient use of scarce resources. For example, several schools can share the cost of hiring a venue or employing a trainer.

Contributing

A Network is not just about what you get from it - **it's also about what you can put into it to help others** and to work together for shared goals.

Information Paths

Network meetings provide efficient and alternative pathways for information to students about education policies and programs. Students and student groups may not always receive this information or realise its significance through individual school sources.

SCHOOLS FOR DEMOCRACY: *From Rhetoric to Reality*

Derry Hannam

Doctoral researcher, The University of Birmingham/School Inspector

Address to the "10 Years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child" Conference, Dublin

26th-27th February, 1999

I am going to argue that schools can and should become significantly more democratic than they commonly are and that only when they do will they effectively educate for democracy and human rights.

When I started teaching in the heady days of 1968 I felt that although English society was only partly democratic it was becoming more so and that schools could and should and maybe even would make a vital contribution to this process. It seemed obvious that young people should be taught about the history, theory and reality of democracy and its alternatives. It seemed equally obvious that if this knowledge was to become a living reality that would develop democratic attitudes, skills and values, then students must also have the experience of participating in democratic procedures and decision making in the mini-society of the school - a classic example of Vygotsky's tool and result methodology (Newman and Holzman, 1993). As time passed I became more democratic in my practice on the one hand while on the other came Mrs Thatcher. I always attempted to include students in decision making in as many ways as my responsibility allowed and my imagination could devise for reasons that were:

- **principled** - ie my understanding of human and children's rights,
- **educational** - involving areas of learning and overall enhancement of the motivation to learn,
- **pragmatic or instrumental** - ie to improve management and thus to improve the school,
- **from personal inclination** - it was more fun than being authoritarian.

This approach led initially to a considerable increase in social or extra-curricular activities, largely created and run by the students themselves. They also began to take responsibility for their own and each

I always attempted to include students in decision making in as many ways as my responsibility allowed and my imagination could devise

other's behaviour initially through law making and then by sharing the policing and judicial function while developing mediation techniques on the way. Later they began to play a key role in organisational activity within the central school functions such as improvements to the environment and the stocking and managing of the library. They were effective very often because they had crucial information which the staff did not. Students began to serve on key working parties and to attend governors' meetings as participant observers (the equivalent of school boards). In my last school, the students were instrumental in founding and helping to run our community education council. They became involved in curriculum decision making at the micro level of the lesson or topic. It became normal for students to take responsibility for their own learning through negotiation, involvement in

planning, implementation and evaluation. Departments began to involve students in longer term curriculum review. The English and Humanities departments set up committees of students to review and choose text-books. The music department made its instrumental spending decisions in collaboration with students. The caretaker requested that a committee of house council representatives should work with him and the cleaning staff. House assemblies became just that - assemblies of the members of the house where questions could be asked of the house council officers, points of view expressed and when necessary votes taken. Students began to propose adaptations to the buildings. And so it went on - and on - and on.

When the UK signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 I was delighted as I thought it would ensure that a statutory framework would be constructed to require all schools to become more democratic. As you know the various rights of the convention break down into those that provide for basic needs, those that provide protection, and those, apparently the most problematic, that provide for participation. Most significantly for our purposes, Articles 12 and 13 are concerned with the right of the child to have and freely express their own views '...in all matters affecting the child, the views being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.' Article 14 defines the right of the child to '...freedom of thought, conscience and religion' and Article 15 guarantees the

'...right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly.' Unfortunately the creation of such statutory requirements are still not in place for UK schools and are not likely to be in the near future - though they soon will be in Ireland. The wording of section 27 of the Irish Education Bill (which became law in December 1998) is pleasingly uncompromising - boards of management '...shall establish and maintain procedures for the purposes of informing students in a school of the activities of the school...', '...shall facilitate the involvement of the students in the operation of the school...', and '...in a post-primary school shall encourage the establishment by students of a student council and shall facilitate and give all reasonable assistance to - students who wish to establish a student council and student councils when they have been established.'

In reviewing the mountain of data collected over the years, the learning outcomes would appear to have included many aspects crucial for the future of democracy:

- **Education for Citizenship in a Democratic Society** - learning skills, attitudes and values as well as knowledge, through really living the concepts discussed in lessons - developing what the Danes call 'action competence';
- **Human Rights Education** - through the day to day resolving of conflicts and priorities involving children's and minority rights and through the students having their rights respected;
- **Legal Education** - the need for the rule of law and due process, the distinction between the policing and the judicial function in the mini-society of the school;
- **Environmental Education** - through direct responsibility for looking after parts of the school;
- **Economic Education** - through fund raising, budgeting, prioritising etc (one house imposed taxes and ran an insurance scheme);
- **Moral Education** - what is 'good' and why should we be it;

- **Development Education** - raising money for the third world and deciding how to spend it;
- The development of problem solving, thinking and communication skills.

School improvements were manifest in both the physical and the psychological environment. New decorations, footpaths and plants appeared, but so did new kinds of relationships between students and students and between students and adults - not only teachers but the growing number of members of the local community who began to use the school as a learning resource. Both aspects enhanced the self-esteem of the students - and the staff! All of which enhanced learning even by the narrow measure of examination results.

The many participative activities engaged the multiple intelligences described by Gardner (1993) and the emotional intelligence explained by Goleman (1996). They demanded a wide variety of learning styles. Bullying became extremely

and if they were they had the means of doing something about it through the class, house or school court - it was against the student created laws to interfere with the rights of another to learn... Overall the involvement of students in debate, decision making, and implementation was a powerful force for school effectiveness and school improvement. I became a passionate - though pretty ineffective - advocate for the democratisation of schools during the rising tide of social irresponsibility and selfishness that was 'Thatcherism'.

It is, therefore, very exciting that there is currently a growth of interest in "Education for Democratic Citizenship" (the title of the current Council of Europe Project) or even in England "Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools" as the recent 'Crick Report' (QCA, 1998) recommending changes to the English national curriculum is entitled. Quite suddenly it feels reasonable rather than revolutionary, sane rather than barking mad, to argue that schools should be more

Quite suddenly it feels reasonable rather than revolutionary, sane rather than barking mad, to argue that schools should be more democratic places if we want students to develop a commitment to democratic practice.

democratic places if we want students to develop a commitment to democratic practice. The need for this step from theory into practice, to learn about democracy at least in part through doing some, is quite explicit in the thinking and documentation of the CoE project, and is clearly implicit in Bernard Crick's key notion of 'political literacy'.

unusual in open environments where the community could act through its own judicial system. This had significance for child protection... I am sometimes intrigued to see personal and social education materials being used in quite authoritarian schools. Instructing children that they must be able to say 'no' to potential abusers while denying them serious opportunities for debate and decision making in most of their school life seems a little contradictory. As bullying declined, the occasional need to exclude students just ceased to exist. The studios were no longer teased for actually enjoying some school work

Virtually every state in the world claims to aspire to being democratic. The awareness of the need for these democracies to be grounded in respect for human rights to prevent the dictatorship of majorities and the oppression of minorities is also apparently well established from the number of signatories to the UN Declaration, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the European Charter. The need for pluralism and the celebration of difference has been widely discussed, albeit more recently tempered with a new concern for the creation of inclusive identities to combat social fragmentation,

exclusion and the creation of underclasses.

I am inclined to agree with Raymond Weber (1998), currently CoE director of education, culture and sport, that the reasons for the new interest in citizenship education lie in the fact that although almost every country in the world now claims to be some sort of democracy, new crises are emerging that are fast bearing down upon us. Basic values are being questioned with the growth of racism, xenophobia and intolerance. Unemployment, social exclusion and radical changes in labour are occurring. There are new difficulties in managing multi-cultural societies with the appearance of all kinds of tribalism, ethnicism, fundamentalism and the rejection of the Other. There is dislocation of social fabric associated with drugs and violence. The established democracies are facing crises with their welfare states. To all of which one must add the progressive alienation of young people from formal democratic political processes.

Can we accept as a working definition of democracy in action something like "the sharing of power between the stakeholders in a nation/ community/ organisation/ group through open access to information and direct or representative participation in decision making"? In a school context, stakeholders would include representatives of taxpayers from central and local government, parents, representatives of the local community, local employers, teachers and other staff and the students. I leave the students until last because that is precisely where they are usually left in participation in school decision making. Participation that extends much beyond occasional consultation or in most cases just 'being there' does not, I think it fair to say, reflect the day-to-day experience of many students in many schools anywhere in the world - though a small number of exceptional schools that could be models of good practice do exist almost everywhere - even in England where I recently had the pleasure of writing about some in the Crick Report. A year or two ago I was involved in creating criteria for British aid funding for third world school systems - it felt rather hypocritical to

include, as we did, that these schools should clearly prepare their students for democratic society at least in part through the experience of participation in decision making within the school. Teaching about legitimacy and accountability were to be key concepts. There was a certain irony in realising how little effort is made in English schools to explain to students the legitimacy of how they are treated or in any sense for headteachers or school boards to regard the student body as one of the groups to which they should be accountable. Could this be true of Ireland also?

There is evidence from all over the world that Civics courses that merely instruct students in political structures and procedures score very highly on scales of boredom and are universally rejected by them. They alone will not nurture young democrats. There is sadly also evidence that school experience generally in English speaking countries becomes less participative and negotiated the older students become and that they find it progressively harder to make sense of the curriculum (Lewis, Lovegrove and Burman 1991). 'It's not that I haven't learnt much. It's just that I don't really understand what I am doing' was the comment of an able 15 year-old used as the title of a fascinating yet depressing 1995 study by Harris, Wallace and Ruddock (1995) which demonstrates beyond doubt that, far from involving even senior pupils in school decision making, we do not even take their views seriously or make any systematic attempt to hear them. In my view, the opinions of the students represent the single most neglected source of potential data for school improvement. I should probably except Denmark and Norway in particular from these comments. Certainly the Norwegians produce beautifully presented booklets for senior school students explaining their rights and expectations for

participation in curriculum planning and wider school decision making (National Centre for Educational Resources, 1994).

So, we want democracy through schools, and we know that didactic instruction will not do the job. There is no shortage of rhetoric, in Dublin in the Bill now passing through the Dail, in Strasbourg and in education ministries across the continent about the importance of student involvement and participation. So how do we do it?

How do we create and manage effective democracy in and for schools that truly educates students and develops within them democratic skills, attitudes and values as well as knowledge?

To get us thinking about the kind of structures and processes that we would like to have and how to overcome the obstacles to their effective functioning, I will briefly refer to the limited research that exists in England into class and school student councils.

I apologise for the Anglocentric nature of the research. I have suggested to the Council of Europe that, as part of their Education for Democratic Citizenship project, a database should be created that would collate research from all member countries in this field. It does not exist at present. There is, of course, the current vast international study being conducted by the IEA into the political understanding and attitudes of many thousands of 14 year olds in many countries. This will attempt to relate attitudes and understanding to school experiences but unfortunately the data is still being collected and we are several years from the publication of findings.

Before looking at democratic structures in schools however, I would just like to refer to the wider civil and political involvement of young people. There have been numerous studies in England of the decline in interest and involvement of under 25s in what one might call mainstream political activity including voting in elections -

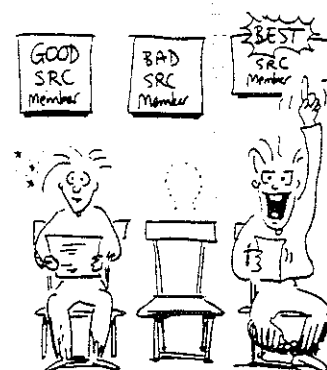
what the French describe as the 'citoyenne' aspect of citizenship, concerned with constitutional rights and legal status. The temporary increase in political interest provided by the election of the Blair government barely affected the participation of young people. Those young people who joined the Labour Party appear to be rapidly departing and fewer than ever voted in the 1997 election. Nonetheless the research findings of Crewe, Searing and Conover into attitudes in the United States and England came as something of a surprise when, in 1996, they discovered that there was also a serious decline in the engagement of young English people in participation in voluntary or communitarian activities, clubs or societies - the French 'civisme' aspects of citizenship. This despite the increase in membership of non-governmental single-issue organisations such as Greenpeace. Many young people, probably the majority, are disengaging from both political and civil society and perhaps most seriously they are ceasing to discuss either in any significant way in their families, with their friends or with their teachers. Two thirds of those interviewed said they never or hardly ever discussed public or even school issues with their teachers in lessons, this figure rising to eighty per cent during informal after-school activities when one would have thought that there was more opportunity. Yet the research also clearly showed that it is through participation in such discourse that the habits and attitudes that lead to political and civil engagement are developed. Formal courses may convey the factual information but it is through discussion and argument that students, I quote, '...appear to acquire the skills and propensities for the practice.' 'By the ages of 15 or 16,' they conclude, 'British school students have not yet absorbed the practice of public discussion but they have absorbed the norm that strongly discourages it.' Is this unique to England? The activities of school students on the streets of Paris and Athens may suggest that it is - but still I doubt it. I fear that the development is Europe wide and possibly applies here in Ireland.

What then do we know about the extent to which schools in the United Kingdom involve students in participative decision making activities and what factors appear to be important in ensuring that this participation is effective and fruitful as learning experience for young democrats?

The studies of the early 1990s such as Fogelman (1991) or Ashworth (1995) were surveys based on questionnaires completed by headteachers. These are people who are under colossal pressure as more and more is expected of them. The findings are thus somewhat suspect and should be treated with caution... They showed that roughly half of the secondary schools responding and 15% of primary schools had elected student councils. A similar survey in 1998 (Baginsky and Hannam) shows little change in these figures. The earlier studies did not reveal whether the students felt their school to have a democratic 'ethos' or atmosphere and Fogelman cautiously concludes that '...provision is variable from one school to another... is often patchy, dependant on the initiative of individual teachers, and probably only available to particular sub-groups of pupils.' We may guess that these sub-groups are predominantly the more academic and middle-class similar to the findings of current Swiss research into which young people know about and get involved in their 'Parlements des Jeunes.' 'Les apprentis ou jeunes travailleurs y sont sous represente... et parlent relativement peu des Parlements.' (Council of Europe, 1998) Ashworth did obtain a little information from a few students in some schools and found them to be less enthusiastic about the success of their student councils than their headteachers.

Studies in particular areas produced some interesting results such as that of Dobie and MacBeath (1996) who surveyed all the schools in the Scottish county of Fife where local government had encouraged the creation of student councils. They quantified the extent to which actual practice in schools matched the stated aims for the councils - what I call the 'aspiration gap.' The

greatest gap was in the area of teaching and learning - the core school function. Over half the schools said that students should have a significant role to play in this but less than 5% felt that they actually did so. More recent work has attempted to investigate in more depth what happens in individual schools. Rowe (1996) found that there was a minority of teachers who were or had been enthusiastic to involve students more effectively in school decision making but that other pressures from central government were using up all their energy and time - not least the new Ofsted inspection system. Titman (1995) found encouragingly that where students did have a real rather than tokenistic say in the planning and developing of the school environment their attitudes towards school and themselves as effective learners significantly improved. In the USA, Conway, Damico and Damico (1993) found that in student participative and more democratic schools, inter-racial



The worst SRC members don't turn up.
The best ones have a lot of good ideas
and opinions.

friendships were far more common than in authoritarian schools. Also in the USA, the extensive and longitudinal High Scope research of Schweinhart and Weikart (1993) has shown that young adults are far less likely to come before the criminal courts if they had opportunities to plan and evaluate their own work in their early schooling. Zalaznik (1980) noted that in democratic schools where students can express their individuality and tolerance of difference is high, there is much less

Overall student attitudes to school and themselves as learners were most positive in the schools with effective councils and lowest in those with ineffective councils - lower than in schools with no student council at all. Food for thought there!

peer group pressure against being seen to be studious - the 'boffin syndrome' that is seriously affecting the attainment of boys in English schools.

Alderson (1998) found that in the 45 England secondary schools in her sample, half had student councils. These divided equally into schools where most students perceived the councils as 'making the school a better place' and those where they did not. Overall student attitudes to school and themselves as learners were most positive in the schools with effective councils and lowest in those with ineffective councils - lower than in schools with no student council at all. Food for thought there! PEG (1997), an organisation that provides training in participation skills that is run by young people themselves in the North of England, recently researched the effect of schools on the mental health of their students. They called their published study 'School Can Seriously Damage Your Health'. They were funded by the health authority, not the education department. They revealed high levels of anxiety and depression that in turn produced physical symptoms which they attributed to teacher pressure and relationship problems with peers such as bullying. Students overwhelmingly felt that teachers were unresponsive and unwilling to take their concerns seriously in many schools. Davies (1998) recently looked in depth for a correlation between schools with a democratic participative ethos, including an effective student council, and low, declining or non-existent rates of student exclusion. She found the correlation - schools with effective councils even in deprived areas did indeed show a reduction in student exclusions even though from my work as an inspector I know the area trends to be in the opposite direction. Causal links are of course harder to prove. Davies revealed a very disturbing feature that I have long suspected to be the case. Some of the most effective councils are to be found in the smaller

proportion of primary schools that have them. She found evidence of great confusion and unhappiness in pupils transferring from a relatively small primary school where they had a real say and their views were taken seriously, to a large, impersonal and authoritarian secondary school. She also found that secondary school students were less willing to engage in dealing with the misbehaviour of peers even when they had an effective council than were primary school pupils. It demonstrates the need for continuity between phases. Fortunately we have in Plymouth a pilot project where six primary schools are working closely with one secondary school in developing a common approach to student participation.

The question of size does seem to be important. The work of Kohlberg (1985) and Sizer (1986) in the USA and the dividing of large New York high schools into schools-within-schools is pertinent here. I have inspected some sixty secondary

- meetings that are frequent with immediate opportunities for feedback and discussion in the constituent groups;
- meetings should be in lesson time and not in student's free time if they are to have status and credibility;
- pupils and teachers, especially link teachers, need training and support in their democratic roles;
- links should exist between the students' council and the teachers, parents, and school board or governors;
- agendas should be wide ranging and not tightly prescribed by the headteacher - they should include both pupils' concerns and wider school policy issues - they should include matters affecting teaching and learning;
- there must be support from a majority of the teachers and, absolutely essentially, the headteacher;
- aspiration gaps must be carefully monitored and discussed.



schools in the last five years and my impression is very much in line with the research that I have mentioned.

The factors associated with effective student councils appear to include:

- structures that create opportunities for all students to be heard - class as well as year or whole school councils;

Changing schools and especially secondary schools in the direction of democracy is not easy. Fortunately there are, in my opinion, enough successful examples (just!) for us not to conclude that the task is impossible, as some thinkers both in the EU and the Council of Europe may be beginning to believe.

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Victorian Student Leadership Council State Conference

All Victorian government school principals have received information outlining details of the Inaugural Student Leadership Council State Conference to be held in Ballarat in October this year. The Conference will be organized by the Victorian Conference Working Party: a group of eighteen students from across Victoria (two from each region). Nine members of the Working Party have just returned from Sydney where they observed and presented a paper at the NSW SRC Conference. The Working Party will meet in Melbourne later this month for a weekend to make final arrangements for the conference.

Ten students from each region are eligible to attend the Conference. Nominations close on Friday August 26th and must be lodged at the student's regional office (for example, at the Benalla Regional Office if you are in North East Victoria). See your Principal for the nomination form.

Schools are invited to nominate ONE student. Interviews may be necessary if there are more applications than places available. The Conference Working Party members will organise these details and inform students after the closing date.

The SLC Conference is sponsored by the Education Trust Victoria Ltd and is supported by the Department of Education. The conference will be very much SLC/SRC/Network focused for the first year, aiming to establish a sustainable network of SLCs in Victoria for 2000 and beyond.

Further details:

Ross Appleby
Department of Education School Community Support Branch,
33 St Andrew's Place, East Melbourne 3002
Tel: 03 96372345 Fax: 03 96372180

Members of Victorian SLC State Conference Working Party in Sydney, August 1999

Wangaratta Junior Council

Who would have thought that somewhere in the world, someone would let nine teenagers loose to spend \$20,000 and trust them not to spend it shopping? Well there is. This year the Council of the Rural City of Wangaratta (Vic) set up a Junior Council and allocated them that money to spend on youth related issues in the community that they thought needed attention.

To form the Junior Council, the senior Council first decided that there would be two representatives from each of the three secondary schools in Wangaratta and two public representatives who would be chosen after interviews. To start the ball rolling, each school held an election and candidates were voted for by the students at their school. Now there were the first six junior councillors. All the senior Council had to do now was to find the two public representatives.

To become a public representative the student first had to fill out an application form answering questions like "what do you want to see done for the youth?" and "How would you go about doing this?" After the applications went in it was time for the interviews. These were done at the schools of the candidates and there wasn't just the one interviewer. When the candidates got to their interview there was a NESAY worker, a community worker who was with Council and two of the senior Councillors themselves. With the interviews done, all the Councillors had to do was to choose two people. This however proved quite a challenge. There were only three people who had gone for the two positions and they couldn't split them at all, so they went back to the drawing board and decided that the Junior Council would have nine members and not eight.

The junior Councillors then had their first meeting and since then, with the help of Paul Squires and Patrick McCarron and much support from the senior Council, the Junior Council has begun working on many great things. Some of these include helping schools with their drug, alcohol and bike safety programs, putting on concerts and activity days to cater for all ages and working on a youth centre where young people can go to just hang out.

So far the Junior Council has been great for all of us. It has given us all much more confidence in ourselves and we all feel that we are finally doing something for our fellow young people.

Megan Knight, Junior Councillor
<holly@crl.com.au>



JSC Radio Show

Hi! Our names are Ricky and Dannielle, and we are Junior School Council representatives from Preston South Primary School on Melbourne.

In Term 1 this year, we were invited to run a radio session on TD FM 99.5 radio station at Thornbury Darebin Secondary College. We were the only primary school to be involved with the radio station in term 1 and it has been an exciting experience.

At first we were nervous, but then we settled down. We arranged with the people at TD FM for the JSCs from year 3 to 6 to go on the radio program from 1.30 pm to 2.15 pm each Tuesday for the last four weeks of all terms.

When we first decided to take part, it was a real rush, because we didn't know what to say or do, but then we coped and did well. Everyone shared their ideas and got a say. We wanted to tell the listeners about our school and the special events that were happening. We also wanted to share our stories, poems and jokes. Each week, we chose favourite songs to play for our listeners.

We hope many JSCs from other schools will have the same experiences as we have had. We have had great fun.

Ricky Commerford (Grade 6)
Dannielle Ciavarella (Grade 3)
Preston South Primary School
Hotham Street
Preston South 3072

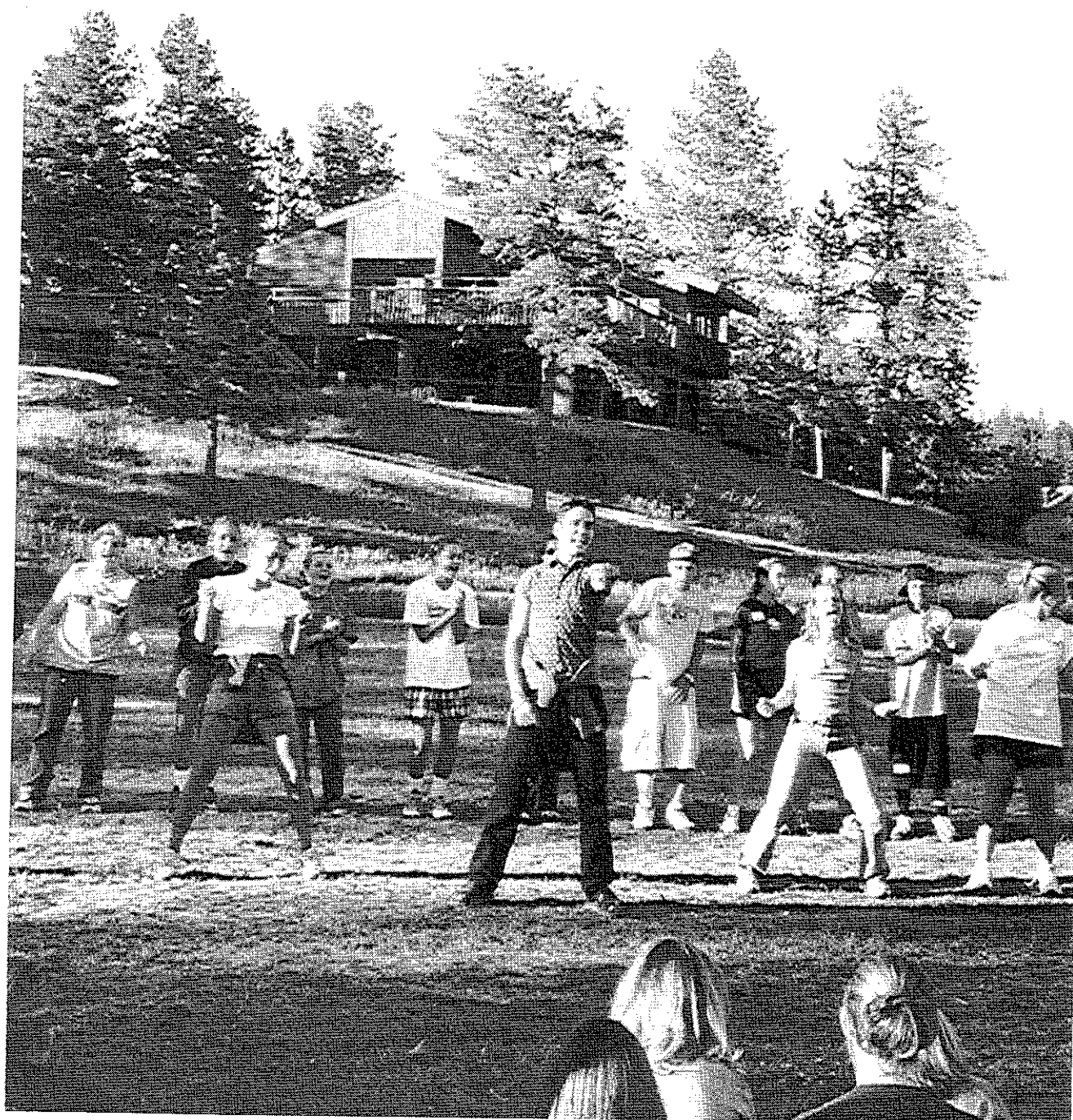
PASTA NEWSLETTER

13 - August 1999

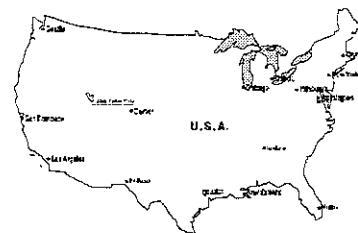
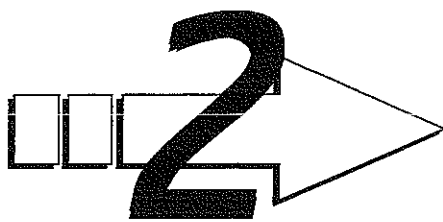
PASTA is the acronym of the Professional Association of Student Representative Council Teacher/Advisors. Founded in New South Wales, Australia, in February 1995, our Association exists to support in whatever ways possible those who work with and support programs of student participation, representation and leadership.



SEE OUR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORM IN THIS ISSUE



SRC AMERICAN TOUR 1999



So What Have We Learnt?

The following is a report given to the New South Wales Student Representative Council. Presented by members of the NSW SRC/ Working Party at a meeting held in Sydney on July 26, 1999, it represents the collective thoughts of both the students and advisers who attended the second USA tour sponsored by PASTA.

As part of the 1999 PASTA USA Tour, twenty Australian students were selected to go on a tour to America during June-July 1999, representing Australian SRCs (Student Representative Councils) and as ambassadors for their country. The group represented a cross-section of Australian young people which showcased their pride in Australia's diversity.

The students attended the 63rd annual National Association of Student Councils (NASC) conference, held in Roseville, Minnesota. There were more than 2000 students and SRC advisers from all over the USA, Puerto Rico and Canada, from whom they learned more efficient ways of running SRCs and also about such things as student empowerment, representation and leadership. Also included in the itinerary was a week at a leadership camp in either Nevada or South Dakota, a week with Bordentown Student Council in New Jersey, and a debriefing/evaluation period in Hawaii.

The tour was coordinated and run by the Professional Association of Student Representative Council Teacher Advisers (PASTA). The group was supervised by four advisers from schools around NSW: Ralph Murray, Ken Page, Sue Page and Ellen Sheerin.

PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

In preparation for this tour, we attended a training weekend to discuss the expectations and objectives of the upcoming tour. This orientation weekend was used as a way of getting

to know our fellow delegates and advisers. Committees were formed to plan workshops to be presented at the 1999 NASC conference to the American students. We discussed the obstacles and successes we each had encountered in our own personal preparation and exchanged ideas to help each other reach our targets.

The following skills were gained and/or improved:

COMMUNICATION

- skills in writing formal letters and approaching companies and corporations as potential sponsors for financial assistance;
- relating to the community and local organisations;
- teamwork and working towards a common goal;
- public speaking;
- improving oral, aural and writing skills.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- self-presentation;
- determination and dedication;
- time management and prioritising;
- budgeting;
- goal setting and persistence;

- motivation;
- independence;
- raising self awareness.

MISCELLANEOUS BENEFITS

- discovering/researching cultural/historical differences between USA and Australia;
- value of media;
- raising profile of SRC within school and community.

In preparing for this tour, we learnt the importance of goal setting and effective use of time management skills in achieving fixed targets. We found the planning weekend to be of great benefit to the students in attendance, who bonded as a team and exchanged valuable ideas and insights into their personal experiences in preparing for this adventure.

We discovered the need for student leadership to be recognised in our society as a potential avenue for future leaders of our country.

NASC CONFERENCE

The 1999 NASC 63rd annual conference was held in Roseville, Minnesota from 26th-30th June at Roseville Regional High School. Motivational speakers included Mark Scharenbroich, Jamie Clark, Desi Williamson, Jackie Pflug and Jesse Ventura. These speakers provided insight into what it means to be a leader in our society. Their speeches were inspiring and uplifting with each giving a message that would have a

lasting effect on the audience. Over 2000 American, Australian, Puerto Rican and Canadian Student Leaders and Advisers were in attendance throughout the week. Delegates attended workshops on various issues run by the students. The Australian delegation ran four workshops in total dealing with issues such as promotion of the Sydney 2000 International SRC Conference, the culture and diversity of Australia and the Student Representative Council system in place in Australia at present.

Delegates also attended 'Hot Topics' which were group discussion which allowed students to debate and discuss controversial issues such as gun violence, discrimination and the abuse of drugs and alcohol in schools.

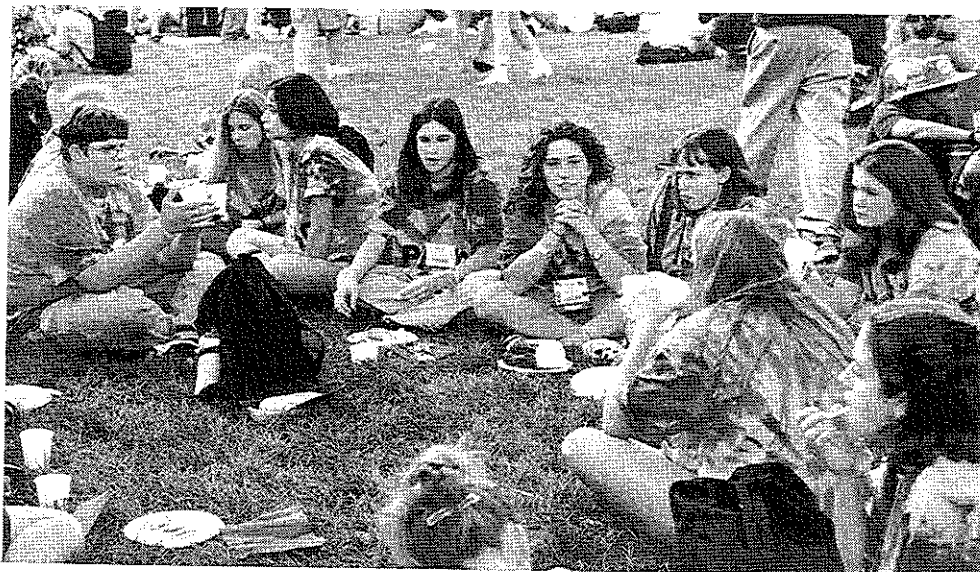
The student leaders also took part in a community service project. This involved a morning spent at local elementary schools working with children from the age of 3-12 to improve their literacy skills.

Students were involved in various activities throughout the week, giving us a cultural insight into the American way of life. This included a visit to the Science Museum of Minnesota, the Minnesota Zoo and a day at the University of Minnesota. At the university, we attended various seminars on topics such as stress management and maximising the potential of an individual, decision making, the consequences associated with taking risks and dealing with inter-personal relationships.

The Candlelighting ceremony, held at the University of Minnesota on the last night of the conference was a very emotional and eye-opening experience. This ceremony was dedicated to the heroes and victims of America's recent encounters with gun violence in schools. This was a time of reflection and bonding for all delegates. Any rivalry or competition previously felt between states or countries was forgotten as they focused on a common realisation.

This conference was an inspiring and educational experience in which many skills were learnt:

- organisation of a major event such as hospitality/housing, security, programming, transportation and community involvement;
- communication with others;
- goal setting and achieving a dream;
- how to effectively prepare for a major event;
- how to represent a school/district/state/country;
- realising the responsibilities of a leader in and outside of our schools;
- discovering the differences in cultures;
- self-confidence;
- how to maximise participation;
- manipulating strengths and weaknesses within a group towards a common goal;
- invoking enthusiasm;
- structure of foreign SRCs and different objectives;
- importance of recognising SRC advisers.



Group at Minneapolis University Campus

During the week we observed the immense patriotism and state/national pride of Americans, hence provoking our own Australian pride. Despite the rivalry between American states, it was fascinating to observe the unification as the United States of America at the Candlelighting Ceremony.

The importance that student leaders are given within the community in America was impressive in the sense that 'StuCo' (Student Council) was a commonplace and well-recognised term. The resulting support of the community was seen from the many local sponsors of the conference.

The obvious amount of time and effort put into this conference was used as a training model for the Sydney 2000 International Conference. From attending this conference, we were given a new found inspiration to provide our country with more worthwhile conferences to help raise the profile of student leaders and better educate students about the issues of today.

TRAVELLING FROM MINNEAPOLIS - ST LOUIS

This was not only a time of reflection, but also preparation for the coming National Leadership Camps (NLC). The week included stops at Duluth, Lake Superior, Green Bay, Chicago and St Louis. While giving us an insight to the culture, heritage and geography of the USA, the tour was also used as a time for evaluating the NASC conference, and further bonding as a team.

Our independence was tested as we faced daily challenges for the first time outside of a host family. The trust between the advisers and student delegates was improved through having room leaders, and meetings each

night. The role of room leader was rotated every few days to allow every delegate the chance of representing/leading their peers.

Spending so much time together taught us to be tolerant of each other, and gave us the opportunity to compare lifestyles and cultural differences. We learnt more about our own country and about each other, growing much closer as a delegation.

During our stay in both Green Bay and St Louis, we were given the opportunity to appear in the local press and on television, as representatives of Australia and student leaders worldwide.

We spent the 4th of July in St Louis, Missouri. This was an eye-opening experience showed the patriotism of Americans and the pride they take in the independence of their country. Because so many of us have an avid interest in politics, witnessing such an important day in American history made the possibility of an Australian republic seem even more real.

Skills learnt during this period include:

- independence (both financially and morally);
- co-operation, teamwork and support networking;
- tolerance of each other and of different cultures;
- responsibilities, duties and allocation of duties eg room leaders;
- the importance of punctuality;
- mediating and improving interpersonal skills;
- how to cope in a large city.

This part of the tour gave us the opportunity to fully appreciate the diversity of our group, as well as providing support for one another. It gave us the chance to communicate with the everyday American.

National Leadership Camps (NLC)

The Australian delegation was divided into two groups to attend two separate National Leadership Camps at either Lake Tahoe, Nevada or Outlaw Ranch, South Dakota. Each camp used the same curriculum but was set in a very different environment.

The week focused on many different aspects of leadership including self-awareness, the meaning of leadership, goal-setting, organisation, communication, effective meeting procedure, problem solving and decision making, group process, conflict resolution, promoting pluralism, evaluation, conducting leadership workshops, icebreakers and boundary breakers, inspiration and reflection.



Group activity, Outlaw Ranch

There were approximately 120 campers in attendance and all delegates were divided into a number of smaller councils each with both student and teacher advisers. These councils became family for the week and friendships were developed that will last a lifetime. It was a time of personal growth both individually and together with other delegates as we learnt about ourselves, life, leadership and SRCs. It gave us the chance to examine our strengths and weaknesses as leaders and left an ever-lasting impression on all in attendance.

Mini-labs and summits were held daily each giving a different perspective on leadership and its role in society. A community service was also undertaken during the course of the camp. Evaluation and debriefing on the days events were a very important part of this camp with nightly 'tranquillity' and lodge meetings which were both a time of reflection and inspiration.

Those of us fortunate enough to be elected as ambassadors for our council learnt about the pressures of working to a deadline, and the importance of delegating responsibilities and spreading duties over a group, to alleviate stress and encourage participation. Other skills utilised by the ambassadors included public speaking and speech writing skills, as well as the need to consult with a variety of people to aptly represent the group opinion.

Some of the many skills gained from our experience at the NLC camps included:

- the role of a leader in society;
- goal-setting and achieving a dream;
- positive stress;
- improving interaction with both schools and community;
- public speaking and representation of others ideas and opinions;
- expressing one's own views and self-confidence;
- developing strategies to solve problems;
- evaluating the performance and how to filter information to different people;
- adaptations to rules and regulations;
- dealing with emotions;
- involving everyone, and using all strengths and improving weaknesses;
- delegatory skills;
- impact of one person;
- how and why to take risks;
- building support networks;
- it's OK to say 'no'.

continued page 19

SRC 2000 Bulletin #6

First International SRC Conference

TEACHERS / SRC ADVISERS / YOUTH POLICY OFFICERS / PARENTS:

IT'S YOUR CHANCE TO 'BUILD A BETTER TODAY' TOO

As we have mentioned in previous issues, the 1st International SRC Conference (The SRC Olympiad of Citizenship and Representation) is two conferences in one: a major professional development opportunity and a major challenge for we adults in this field to meet, share with each other and our student leaders and build - separately and together - for our own better present situations and the future.

PASTA's Overseas SRC Leadership Tours, which next year may extend to Canada and New Zealand in addition to the USA National Conference and Leadership Camps are, amongst many other things, key promotional and organisational aspects of our preparations for these combined conferences in Sydney next year.

The accompanying PASTA Newsletter article in this issue (by student members of the NSW SRC who were also international delegates to the USA) illustrates one of the key lessons of representation. That is, that the real work begins once representatives (at any level and in any school or District) report on their experiences to many different audiences, thereby encouraging and challenging them to take up new opportunities.

This is no different for adults. We see these tours as outstanding professional development opportunities for SRC Advisers and, really, for any teachers or other adults involved with young people. The challenge and the opportunity is to join us on the 3rd Annual OZ -USA/ Canada SRC Leadership Tour.

However, the 2000 Tour goes much further even than that. This tour will be the last such before Sydney's International SRC Conference. Our annual SRC tours will continue as invaluable professional opportunities after that, but never again will there be the special responsibility to add your presence and develop further your own expertise in such a way that a mere five months later the world will come to our own backyard to see how well we can do it here for other host Olympic cities to emulate from then on.

The citizenship challenge and the gold medal opportunity therefore is to join us now in helping to organise that inaugural Conference, along with our now many confirmed colleagues in the USA and Canada - and elsewhere. We urge you to seriously consider helping yourself by helping us. Join us as an adviser on this absorbing and professionally and personally rewarding tour and/or become an active adviser helper/organiser/delegate to Australia's unique contribution to the national and international promotion of SRCs and student leadership - the SRC Olympiad of Citizenship and Representation.

As we continue to prepare for both, we need written indications from you to move forward on these new challenges and give you the opportunity to be part of them. Fill in the application form on the back page of this SRC 2000 Bulletin. Write to our Tours Organiser Ken Page. Encourage and advise students to also apply to one or both of these invaluable learning experiences and become co-organisers, therefore co-owners of these seriously challenging and seriously rewarding events.

1st International SRC Conference 2000
13 - 17 December 2000

"Student Representative Councils: Building A Better Today"

Representation is a tricky business...

Representation is a tricky business. Not deceitful. Magical perhaps, because it is quite difficult. But tricky. Without self-discipline and will power - and perhaps too a little luck from your friends - it just doesn't happen.

We expect politicians - elected to represent our views - to devote a lot of their time - when Parliament is not sitting or affairs of state are not urgent - talking with us, the members of their constituency. In other ways, their representative status means they should attempt to assess the majority view on major issues and follow up on our behalf particular issues of personal concern to us.

By contrast, politicians, like all representatives, can virtually ignore those who elected them and vote or argue according to their personal beliefs or be influenced by the most vocal individuals or lobby groups. As a student (or parent or staff) representative, you need to look personally and seriously at what 'representation' means. A starting point may be to list what it does not mean.

YOU ARE NOT THERE FOR YOURSELF ALONE

Representation does NOT mean ignoring the views of others who chose you; it does NOT mean the chance to put forward just your own personal views to the exclusion of others; it does NOT mean keeping things to yourself, or just within your representative group or among your personal peer group. Neither, however, does it mean sticking blindly to a point of view - yours or the group's - if compelling arguments are brought to your attention which in your best considered judgement, alter the circumstances.

MOSTLY - having been an active and valued enough communicator to be selected - it does NOT mean suddenly stopping your activity and your communication when your conference or in-service is finished. The real value of representation often starts when you get home.

SO WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Clearly, to represent requires some effort on your part to know ahead of time what issues or projects might be discussed. Read the program. Contribute to it. Develop some ideas ahead of time. Consult people and printed resources - and bring them along for others to examine with you.

Then, canvass - that is, inform and consult and find out the opinions on the issues of as many students or adult colleagues as possible. Some issues may be important enough to do a full-scale survey of the whole student body or membership. For others, it may be sufficient to consult with the SRC or Adviser group alone. With the rest of your group by and large also properly skilled in representing others (if not, they should be trained to be) then your task is easier. They assist you to gather your information.

Most important (and difficult) is to avoid sampling opinion and gathering information from your peer group only and concluding that it represents the views of most students or most members of your staff or association. It

is too easy to be myopic, that is, to see things narrowly in terms of the interests of your year at school, of your faculty, of your community. Reflect all of those, but, whether coming as a student or an adult, represent the diversity of other years, other disciplines, the diversity of your community as well.

BUT I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO?

So, how do you find the time, the will, the confidence and the skills to represent others? Here are some suggestions. Add your own to them. Then write to us and share them for the better representation of all.

1. FOCUS: Make the representative process a theme for a full SRC workshop, a district conference program, a professional development in-service activity. You may be attending this conference or meeting, but others will be representing you elsewhere.

2. WIDEN YOUR NETWORK: Have a similar emphasis in meetings with the entire school council, the full staff or the membership of your executive committee.

3. STUDY: Survey techniques and listening exercises. Do them as class or action research projects. Have them assessed (consult with PASTA or the DET for outside assessment consultants). Then carry out some for real (using sampling) on real issues for your conference.

4. PRACTISE: Role play with your student representative council, your P & C or school council, your faculty. For starters, do it with people you feel comfortable with, then widen your network. Simulate the communication situation you will face in talking with younger students, older students, administrators, media, interested peers, those young and older who give the impression they don't care.

5. ASK PEOPLE: As a representative, make the issues you deal with part of a lunchtime conversation, an afternoon gabfest, a Sunday chat.

6. PROFILE: Use a range of publicity techniques to give a high profile (recognition factor) to your representative position and the importance of the conference. Don't forget to emphasise that you are attending on behalf of them as well as yourself.

7. REPORT BACK: To your SRC of course. To your teachers - or, if a teacher, to your students. To your wider school and community. To your family also. Yes, use the media. But mainly, use your legs to get around and your mouth to articulate what's going on.

8. REPORT AND CONSULT: Beforehand as well as after the event. What's going on? What's the latest change in the program? How is this or that going to happen?

9. REPORT AND RESPOND: While at your conference or other representative function. You do naturally anyway by paraphrasing and discussing the implications of things. Don't just talk about the weather or the food or the latest sports results. Do that too if you need to, but you NEED

to talk about the issues and actions which are the purpose of the conference or meeting you are attending. If facilities exist there to e-mail, fax or call your group, then use them. (The Internet Centre at the SRC International Conference in Sydney 2000 will help here.)

10. REPORT AND REFLECT: In as many ways and to as many groups as you can find the time and the help from others to do so. SRC, staff, parent and community and council meetings of course. But beyond that? In the end, as much as you try to represent a wide range of views, you are the one present and listening to the pro and con arguments -before, during and after your meetings. It may very well be that the position you take is one you judge in the circumstances to be the best for the student body, the school, your membership as a whole. (Even the entire planet! Consider environmental issues for a start.) Your judgement may, in the end, NOT match the majority views as previously assessed. As long as you are prepared to explain to your group (and the others you consulted) why you reached the decision you did (and do it!) then you're being a representative.

BUT NO-ONE ELSE CARES

WRONG! You wouldn't be their representative if they didn't. Don't be put off by negative responses from many students or staff. Much of what you'll be discussing and making recommendations and decisions about may be remote and too boring or abstract for a majority of your student body or membership, especially more junior or newer members. They may appear disinterested, "too busy" - even antagonistic - but if you do your job right, the overwhelming majority WILL really want to know what it's all about. They might not tell you that. Probably it's just because they are expecting you to be doing the telling.

Whether student or teacher, negotiate to have some time to explore an issue with your class or subgroups within it. English, History and Social Science, Science and Personal Development classes are often good ones to use because the activity and / or issue can be justified as part of the overall syllabus outcomes. However, you may just happen to have (or be!) a Maths teacher you really get along with or a language class which would really benefit from such a discussion. If so, go for it!

By being a good representative, you are raising awareness and improving your group's image, its profile - that of your SRC, your school, your community, your profession. Not the least, your and our adviser association, PASTA. They will expect you (as - in spite of regular cynicism - we have a right to and do with politicians) to devote a lot of your time talking with them and providing them with not just the feedback about your conference representation BUT the leadership to move them towards ongoing action initiated by it.

BUT THAT'S A MATTER FOR ANOTHER EDITION. CONTACT THE ORGANISERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO IT.

Charles Kingston

HOW'S YOUR REPRESENTATION? A QUIZ

Take this representative quiz. Do the representative tango. As International Representatives of Australia, our 1999 SRC delegates to the USA (see the PASTA Newsletter) have been given more than 120 questions to check their current knowledge of their and other's representatives. Try yourself on these 20 selected from their list.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS (These are elected/selected to represent)

1. Who is your Governor-General?
2. Your Federal Minister for Education?
3. Your Ambassador to the USA?
4. The mayor of Sydney? Your mayor?
5. Your Federal and State Members of Parliament?

AUSTRALIAN CULTURE (These too represent us)

6. Who are some paralympic athletes?
7. Australian Academy Award nominees?
8. Australian writers and business people?
9. Aussie basketballers & baseballers on USA teams?
10. Volunteers who deserve recognition?

NORTH AMERICA (Where we are sending them as OUR representatives)

11. Who is the United States Vice-President?
12. The Governor of Minnesota?
13. The Prime Minister of Canada?
14. What is NASC? NASAA? CASAA? CADA?
(check out this and last issue)
15. The Secretary-General of the United Nations in New York?

THE AUSTRALIAN STUDENT COUNCIL MOVEMENT

16. Who's your District SRC Representative? Your state representative?
17. Which students are on the Coordinating Committee for SRC 2000?
18. Name the President of PASTA and any of the Vice-Presidents.
19. What's the site and theme of the 1st International SRC Conference?
20. Most importantly, what does 'SRC' stand for and what's that mean?

CONTACT DETAILS

Sydney 2000 First International SRC Conference
1 Gladstone Street, Bathurst NSW Australia 2795
Phone: (02) 63322603 Fax: (02) 63322302
E-mail: ckingston@interact.net.au

<http://hsc.csu.edu.au/pta/pasta/>

APPLICATION TO ATTEND/PRESENT AT THE 1st SRC INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE - SYDNEY 2000

NB: By filling in this application, you are helping us to organise this Conference. It does not yet obligate you to attend. It is a step in that direction - a more specific expression of interest than those circulated before. Formal registration forms will then be sent to you in due course.

Tick whichever applies in the questions below.

Add explanatory material as indicated.

Registration fees for this Conference are Australian \$500 (c. US\$320) for all delegates. This is comparable to those for similar functions in North America, Europe and elsewhere. Wherever possible, delegates should seek to be funded by the group they represent and its wider community. If attending as an adult adviser, seek funding as a professional development activity.

Registration includes all Conference needs for the five days from time of registration except housing for adults. Students will be hosted by families in the Sydney region. Adult registrants outside the Sydney metropolitan area will be sent a list of recommended hotels or alternative group accommodation. They will need to make their own bookings unless separate arrangements are made with the organising committee, including any prepayments required. Day registrations at reduced rates may be available if Conference numbers allow, but this will not be known until two months before the Conference.

Further questions? E-mail: ckingston@interact.net.au or write to the postal addresses as indicated in this and all publicity.

SECTION II:

For those applying to present a workshop, make a presentation, do a performance, have a display, present in the Exhibit Hall etc:

F. I/Our group (*cross off whichever does not apply*) wish to apply to do a presentation on the theme of:

- ☐ 1. "Celebrating Our Cultural Heritage" (Day 1)
- ☐ 2. "Challenges Facing Young People in the 21st Century" (Day 2)
- ☐ 3. "The Environment: Preserving Our Future" (Day 3)
- ☐ 4. "The Media, Political Process and You" (Day 4)
- ☐ 5. "Building A Better Today" (Overall Conference Theme - could be any day)

G. How many people would likely be involved in doing your presentation or performance?

H. How many of these will be secondary students at the time of the Conference?

I. How many of these presenters are intending to apply to be delegate representatives also?

(NB. It is not essential to do so at this time but if the names of other presenters are known at present, please list them on a separate sheet. Before final confirmation in June 2000 - prior to finalising the Conference program - we will need to know this information.)

Upon confirmation of your application, a more detailed form will eventually be sent to you for mutual exchange of further details.

SECTION I:

FOR DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE

- A. I wish to apply to attend the above Conference as a:
 - ☐ 1. Student Representative
 - ☐ 2. Adult Representative
 - ☐ 3. Committee Member
- B. The name of the group I will represent is
- C. My position in or role with this group is
- D. My/our contact details are as follows:
 - 1. Mailing Address:
 - 2. Phone/Fax and E-mail (if available):
- E. I/We DO/DO NOT (*cross off whichever does not apply*) wish to apply to do a presentation.
- F. Please examine the draft program and send us your suggestions for the issues, resources and types of sessions you would like to see at this Conference.

J. The type of presentation or involvement I am/we are proposing is: (*You may tick more than one area as long as details of each appear on separate sheets*)

- ☐ 1. Workshop for student delegates
- ☐ 2. Adviser Program Workshop
- ☐ 3. Roundtable Discussion
- ☐ 4. Performance (*indicate clearly what type - dance, music, drama, other - in description below and whether intended for Conference General Session or smaller scale audience*)
- ☐ 5. Participant/s in panel
- ☐ 6. Participant/s in debate
- ☐ 7. Speaker at General Session
- ☐ 8. Facilitator of interactive workshops (*non-issue-oriented, getting to know you sessions*)
- ☐ 9. Have a static display (*that can stay up unattended throughout the Conference*)
- ☐ 10. Have a display stall (*rostered so as to talk to people throughout the Conference or during breaks*)
- ☐ 11. Have an exhibit in the Exhibit Hall: especially for but not restricted to businesses, volunteer organisations and government departments (*applies to Days 1, 2 & 3 only*)
- ☐ 12. OTHER (*please describe:*)

K. Details of your proposed presentation:

- 1. Suggested Title:
- 2. Subject of Presentation:
- 3. People likely to be involved:
- 4. Estimate of time needed:
- 5. Space/technical requirements:
(Use separate page for details.)

We realised the potential that each person and every SRC has in both their school and community to make an impact; also that to lead others you must understand yourself, which is why this week was such a great success. The personal growth that we undertook was not only of great value to the individual, but is able to be taken back to the school and community, to benefit a wider range of people, so they too can better understand themselves and therefore better perform their role as leaders.

HAWAII

Hawaii was the final leg of our tour and also a very important time of both reflection and preparation. The seemingly annoying displacement of our luggage actually tested our

group's problem solving skills. Through working as a team we managed to survive the three days off the bare essentials without taking anything away from the overall experience.

Our stay in Hawaii provided a very valuable time of reflection in which both individually and as a group we could look back on our past experiences comparing our personal responses of our journey. It allowed everyone a time

to evaluate the changes and personal growth they had undertaken and gave the delegation a chance to de-brief on the entire trip. Through many meetings, open discussions and small group encounters Hawaii also provided the basis for our preparation for returning home and re-adjusting to the Australian way of life and reality. It was a time of planning for the future whilst remembering and learning from our past experiences.



Workshop at Outlaw Ranch

BORDENTOWN

We spent this week with the Student Council members of Bordentown Regional High School. They had worked very hard for months prior to our arrival, to ensure the week we shared with them went as smoothly as possible. The local community supported the school SRC with the donation of prizes and services to raise funds for our stay.

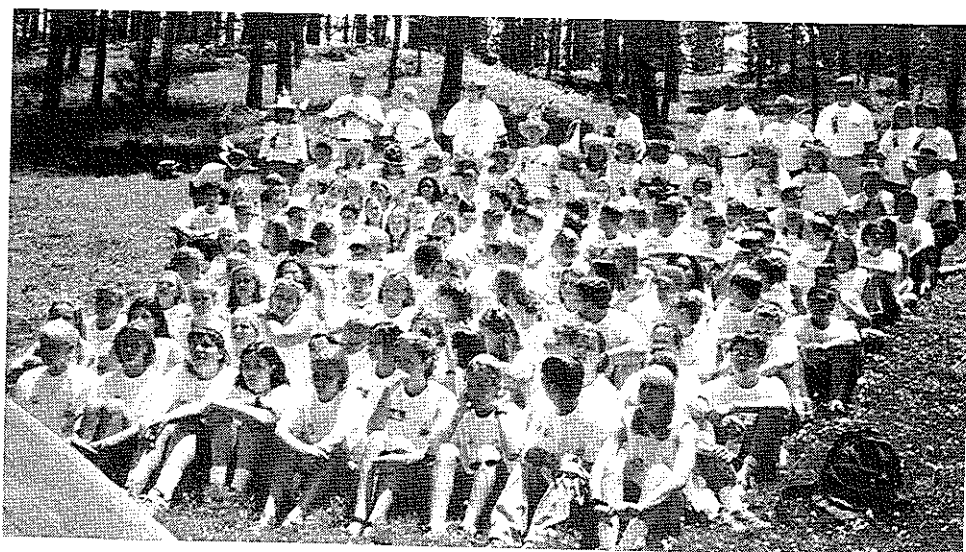
We attended one of their Student Council meetings, observing the roles of the different positions held and official meeting procedure. Throughout the week, discussions took place regarding the different activities both their and our SRCs undertake and exchanged ideas.

We were also fortunate enough to visit the United Nations in New York and attended a meeting at the Australian Mission with one of the Australian associate of the Ambassador. This gave us a chance to discuss the role of the UN and the current world issues involving Australia.

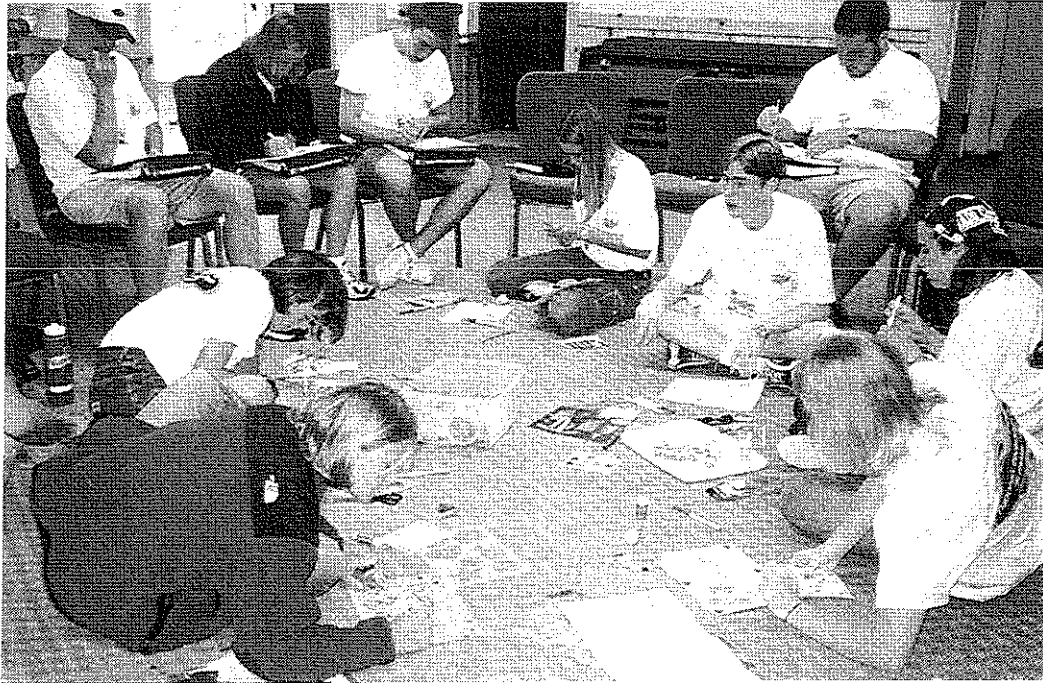
Some skills we learnt during our stay at Bordentown included:

- official meeting procedure;
- delegation and division of power within an SRC;
- adapting to a different environment i.e. host families;
- overcoming fear and taking risks;
- goal-setting;
- creating support networks within the community.

Staying in Bordentown had many advantages and was not only a success for the Australians, by learning from the Americans but this role was also reversed, with the Americans gaining a great deal from our Australian delegation.



Outlaw Ranch group



Workshop, Lake Tahoe

BRINGING IT HOME

We plan to apply our newfound knowledge through a variety of school-based activities involving the SRC and student body as facilitators. This was a once in a lifetime experience which has given us memories that will last forever, and knowledge applicable to every facet of our lives. We hope to impart this information to students at all levels of representation so that they too may become better leaders, and improve Australian SRCs. A more detailed report of this trip will be compiled and distributed at a later date.

We would recommend this trip to anyone with a commitment to student leadership, strong interest in SRC, and a willingness to tackle challenges.

On behalf of the 1999 PASTA USA Australian delegation,

Lisa Bollard
Rebecca Engelen
Rebecca Heinrich

(North Sydney Girls' High School)
(Barrenjoey High School)
(Carlingford High School - official student head - called
the State President - for our delegation at the conference)
(Ulladulla High School)

Katherine McCormack



Boarding the plane, Sydney Airport

APPLICATIONS FOR USA SRC TRIP 2000 OPEN NOW.

The venue is
**CUPERTINO,
CALIFORNIA**
(near San
Francisco).

The theme is
**"THE
WORLDWIDE
WEB OF
LEADERSHIP"**

Contact:

Ken Page
12 Dyson Drive
Norah Head
NSW 2263

PASTA CALENDAR

RELATED INTERNATIONAL EVENTS OF NOTE

- 25 - 29 October 1999 - Millennium Young People's Congress (MYPC) - Hawaii (focus on environmental youth action)
- 4 - 6 November 1999 NASAA (National Association of Student Activity Advisers) 2nd Annual Conference - Chicago Illinois USA
- 13 - 16 December 1999 UNESCO/ACEID Conference - Voice of Youth - Bangkok Thailand
- 18 - 25 April 2000 - 2000 World Summit of Children Conference - Adelaide Australia
- 29 March/1 April 2000 - 5th International Student Leadership Conference - Cairo Egypt
- 24 - 28 June 2000 - "World Wide Web of Leadership" - Theme for NASC (National Association of Student Councils) 64th Conference - Cupertino California USA
- 13 - 17 December 2000 - 1st International SRC Conference (The SRC Olympiad of Citizenship and Representation) - Sydney Australia

HOW DO YOU RATE?

The following is taken from a booklet entitled A Student Council Adviser's Guide by Dr Earl Reum. While there are no prizes for being the adviser with the greatest number of these attributes, it does provide an interesting (and perhaps thought-provoking) checklist.

Students think that Advisors should:

- keep quiet at meetings. . .but speak when needed.
- let the council run the meetings. . .but save us from our enthusiasm.
- be willing to listen. . .and to teach others the skill.
- add information when asked. . .and help us to reflect on our own ideas.
- love working with students/install leadership qualities in everyone.
- listen to ALL ideas. . .and help us choose the best.
- be easy to get along with. . .but still be a "teacher."
- not try to influence us when we are making decisions. . .but keep us on track and appropriate.
- try to understand all sides of each issue. . .and help us do the same.
- be honest.
- always have answers to questions. . .and always have questions which make us think.
- believe in the power of the students and support their effectiveness.
- direct the Council's energies into events beyond dances.
- helps us get things done.
- have great, easy-going personalities.
- really care about the Council and about other student organizations
- care about the 'invisible kids'.
- bring in new problems for leaders to work on.
- attend every meeting.
- have a great sense of humour.
- always be on the lookout for anything that will help the Council, the school and the students.
- develop and promote new ideas in the school
- always be trying to improve their own personal skills as an adviser.
- be comfortable around the students
- pitch in and help with projects.
- have strategies of influence with other staff members.
- be understanding of students and various student viewpoints.
- stick with groups and committees and help them get things done.
- be patient and offer opinions without interfering.
- try to get everyone involved in something important to that person.
- never promise anything they can't deliver.
- know parliamentary procedure well, but have lots of other meeting skills which can be used effectively.



Considered by many both here and overseas to be the founder/creator of many of the ideals by which SRCs operate, Dr Reum has been a keen advocate of students helping students for most of his adult life. Now in his 80s, he is still very active in this field.

Membership Form

I wish to apply to join/renew my membership
for the year ending 30th June, 199 ____

Title Given Names

Family or Institutional Name

Home/Postal Address

School/Business Address

Phone Number Home Work

Fax E-mail

Employing Authority

☐ NSW Department of School Education

☐ Other (please specify)

Area of Particular Interest ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary

Membership (includes subscription to **Connect** magazine)

☐ Ordinary \$50 ☐ Student \$25 ☐ Overseas \$50

☐ Institutions \$80 ☐ Concessional \$25 ☐ Corporations \$100

☐ I enclose a cheque for \$ made payable to PASTA Inc.

OR

☐ Please debit my credit card for the amount of \$

Credit Card ☐ Bankcard ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa

Please check your credit card number before sending this form

Signature Expiry Date

What does membership of PASTA offer you?

- Positive support for SRC teacher advisers
- Practical workshop ideas for use in schools
- Regular seminars, workshops and conferences at an Association, State and National level at reduced registration rates
- Regular newsletters and journals
- Training and development within the SRC area
- A support network for SRC advisers
- Access to SRC networks
- Special resources for students and teachers
- Opportunities to be involved in discussions on the future of SRCs at all levels
- Attendance at open meetings of PASTA which are held at the Joint Council Buildings, Corner Marion and Norton Streets, Leichhardt.
Phone: (02) 9564 3322; Fax: (02) 9564 2342

Mail subscriptions to:

PASTA Inc.,
c/- 12 Dyson Drive,
Norah Head
NSW 2263

You Are Not Alone

True stories, music, poems, ideals, art, photos, feelings, suggestions
by the under 25ers for anyone out there feeling alone.

This resource is planned as a follow up to the **Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company** tour of country Victoria, which took place early in 1998. The tour was a direct outcome of the work of Jan Osmotherly and Glen Scholfield from Osfield Consultants who first arranged the visits to the North East for the youth forums **Teenaction** and **Teenroar**...

The issues are everywhere, but the question for all of us in **Somebody's Daughter** was: where do you go for support in the country? It's hard enough in the city where, at least, there is some chance of anonymity...

Maud Clark, Artistic Director

... A Grant from **The Queens Trust for Young Australians** was given to create a resource which would assist young people to deal with issues raised in the production. The first step was to ask young people: what would work? What kind of resource could there be which would be actually useful to others - especially those in rural and remote areas? Clearly it was not going to be a textbook or a set of curriculum materials which just informed about drugs or relationships... No, this didn't connect...

"We want to hear other kids' stories - what they are going through, feeling, thinking ..."

And so the shape of **YANA (You Are Not Alone)** began to take form. It was a very flexible shape that kept weaving around in the winds of the demands of life and school and home. Plans were made and scrapped and made and modified - surveys were written and screwed up - interviews organised then forgotten - tapes made then lost - stories written onto computers only to disappear into cyberspace without trace... But take shape it did. Once it was accepted that this really was the voice of young people - it was them speaking to each other - that there were others who were willing to listen and not judge - stuff came pouring in. Anonymous faxes, letters, poems, drawings ...

The students from **Beechworth Secondary College** did an amazing job - tapping into the 'network', interviewing other kids, encouraging them to express their lives in the best way they knew how...

Jan Osmotherly, Project Coordinator

Earlier this year, we saw the **Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company** perform. The majority of the women who perform in the company had served prison sentences. The performances were based on these women's true stories and how they dealt with the situations that they found themselves in throughout their lives. These women had gone through traumatic ordeals, but have got through them and dealt with their problems and are now living their lives the way they want to.

The performances brought up emotions and feelings that most people would rather ignore. It brought up a lot of issues that people need to deal with, which had not been addressed or talked about. Furthermore, this raised a concern about the lack of discussion and awareness of these problems in small country towns. The general impression is that there are no major problems, and it is 'unacceptable' and 'weird' to have any. However, there are many issues here that are every bit as important as other situations found in the city. Also, in small communities, there are less forms of help and information available. This leaves individuals feeling alone so they suppress their emotions, or deal with them in ways that can be frowned upon by other members of society.

Jan came to our school and asked five of us to work on a resource addressing these issues, with the theme: '**You Are Not Alone**'. This was to be put together by teenagers in the country so that other teenagers in the country could relate to it and use it as a resource.

The five of us were sent off to find artwork, poetry, stories and feelings that affected other teenagers' lives. It was fairly hard at the best of times, because people don't always know that they have a problem, or don't find it very easy to open up and talk about their deepest feelings to someone they don't know very well. However, we managed to come up with a booklet to help others see that they are not alone.

It contains stories from incest and abuse to suicide and great depression, excellent artwork and poetry and heaps more. It has little bits of everything and it has all come from teenagers in rural areas proving just how much really does go on in small country towns.

Elly Taylor and Bonnie Serong - on behalf of the **Beechworth Secondary College Editorial team**

The You Are Not Alone package contains:

- a booklet;
- a CD-ROM (including web-site, songs, video-clip, art and more)
- a poster;
- guide notes for using the resource.

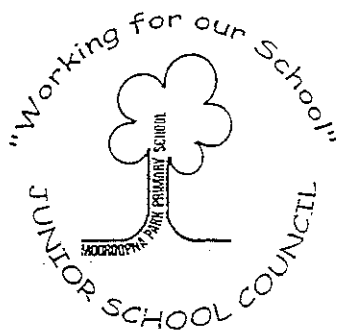
Cost: \$45 including postage

From: Osfield Consultants
RMB 8456
Wangaratta 3678

(Osfield Consultants are the project coordinators and distributors of the project package on behalf of **Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company**.)

Web: <http://www.netc.net.au/yana/default.htm>

Produced by students at Beechworth Secondary College and other young people who have dared to bare their souls.



Moorroopna Park PS
MacIsaac Road, Moorroopna 3629
Phone: (03) 5825 3856

We go to Moorroopna Park Primary School (MPPS). Our school is in the small town of Moorroopna in Victoria. We have 322 people at this school and we have 12 classrooms. We have a Junior Unit, a Middle Unit and a Senior Unit.

We have a program called Junior School Council (JSC). Two people from each classroom, grades 3-6 in the middle and senior unit, are in it. At the start of the year, you can become a member by being voted for by your class. Before you are voted for, you get nominated and give a speech. The two students who have the highest vote are in JSC.

JSC helps our school by gardening, helping to stop litter and where to put new drink taps. We help charities like the Deafness Foundation and we run Red Nose Day at our school. We also do out-of-uniform days, have sports for the students and we fundraise for ourselves.

Nicole Ryan and Bianca Simpson, *MPPS JSC Secretaries*
<mpps@mail.sheppnews.com.au>

Emmaus Catholic College, NSW

Schooling for Democracy

Our philosophy is based on a belief in empowering and involving students in the decision-making processes in the College and, where possible, in training them in skills which will be useful through their whole life. The concept is leadership through a service model and the building of resilient people.

Student Leadership in: **SRC** **School Council:**

This involves the two School Presidents who attend Council meetings at night every six weeks. They are equal members of the Council; they have an understanding of confidentiality when necessary; they put forward student opinions and liaise with the Student Representative Council. The responsibilities of the Council are to:

- give public expression when the occasion arises in matters affecting Catholic Education;
- be informed about current education issues and then provide advice on major curriculum initiatives for the school;
- identify and communicate education and pastoral needs and priorities;
- assess the College's financial needs and expenditure priorities and develop a budget/expenditure strategy on the advice of the Principal;
- approve the annual budget put forward by the Principal and review the budget each term.

This is a body made up of student elected members from years 7 to 12. They have a teacher facilitator and they bring forward any student issues which come from their respective years. These issues are then brought up by various councillors to the Principal. The Presidents and Vice-Presidents are elected after speaking to their form about their talents and willingness to serve and are interviewed by the Principal. The SRC are trained on a two-day leadership camp.

The Leadership Program

This is open to all years 11 and 12 students and gives recognition to students who complete the program, in the form of a portfolio.

House Captains

House Captains are elected by the students and are mostly responsible for sporting events. They are trained and set their goals at a two day Leadership Camp.

Class Captains

Class Captains are elected by their home class and have responsibilities in home class.

Peer Support

Peer Support students are volunteers from year 10 who undergo a full day's training to work with an induction program for year 7. They have a teacher facilitator.

Peer Mentors

Mentors are trained in Choice Theory and are available to help their peers with problems which may involve conflict, personal problems etc. They are led by our School Counsellor and a group of teachers, and are trained to refer when necessary.

Social Justice and Amnesty Societies

These are clubs which allow students to lead the school in supporting issues based on Social Justice. They are volunteers and are joined by a small group of teachers.

Emmaus Catholic College
PO Box 631
St Mary's NSW 2760
Phone: 02 9670 4588
Fax: 02 9834 3403



Youth Involvement in Policy-Making: Lessons from Ontario School Boards

by Elder C. Marques

Background

If an engaged and interested citizenry is at the heart of a strong democracy, then current talk of youth indifference to the political process is troubling.¹ Youth apathy has implications for the development of public policy today and the quality of our citizens tomorrow.

Commentators cite the lack of adequate civics curricula, the effect of the news media, and the negative tone of political debate as causes of youth apathy. Proposed solutions focus on political education, but an equally important response is the expansion of opportunities for political participation. Apathy may well be the response of young people to their political marginalisation and a culture that does not tend to value their input.

Political institutions in Canada have shown little interest in engaging our youngest citizens. Even in cases where participation mechanisms have been implemented, they have often been seriously flawed. This may be worse than having no mechanisms at all because poorly designed models of youth participation reinforce cynical attitudes about the political process and fuel the apathy that they were meant to dispel.

Education, which is targeted almost exclusively at young people, is a good example of their political exclusion. No group is more greatly affected by education policy decisions than those being educated, yet the level of student influence on that process ranks behind that of politicians, bureaucrats, parents, and union leaders. There are important reasons for including students in educational governance, such as:

- Making better decisions, and being able to implement them more easily
- Raising awareness of political issues among students
- Providing students with opportunities to assume leadership roles and gain skills
- Demonstrating “who does what”
- Promoting an appreciation of the value of debate, lobbying, and compromise in our democracy
- Demonstrating the importance of the public sector, rather than lecturing about it

The *Education Quality Improvement Act*, passed by the Canadian province of Ontario in 1997, represents a modest effort to provide greater student input into decision-making. The legislation mandated the creation of non-voting student representatives on school boards across the province. The Act, however, left it to individual boards to decide how the representative would be selected and how much influence he or she would really have.²

In 1999, the Institute On Governance (IOG), in partnership with the Ontario Secondary School Students' Association (OSSSA), studied different models of youth involvement in public policy development.³ One case study evaluated various student trustee models developed across Ontario in response to the legislation. School boards were asked to provide the IOG with copies of their student trustee policies, and administrators, trustees, and students were interviewed about their experiences with student trusteeship.

This Policy Brief presents the findings of this evaluation and proposes recommendations for legislative changes and improved implementation strategies. Although targeted at the Ontario situation, it also has general implications for the design and implementation of other youth participation models.

Findings

The legislation on student trustees is badly flawed and has been poorly implemented by many school boards.

To be sure, there are cases where student involvement has been a success. Boards that have developed democratic selection mechanisms, provided orientation and support to student trustees, and encouraged student participation have found that the benefits of student trusteeship quickly overshadowed any of their initial concerns.

Across the province, however, the general picture is cause for concern. Implementation of student trusteeship indicates that student engagement remains a low priority for public officials in a time of significant reform in the education system. Key concerns include:

1. Legislative and regulatory limitations on student trustees and the absence of standards are barriers to meaningful participation.

Provincial legislation and regulation limits the ability of student trustees to participate meaningfully in the decision-making process. First, students are not allowed to cast votes. Their participation in school board decision-making is limited to making arguments before the board. Second, student trustees are excluded from meetings that are closed to the public. On many school boards, important debate and compromise takes place in such meetings. While there are times where sensitive personnel issues could represent a conflict of interest for students, in most cases this would not be an issue.

The legislation is also weakened by its lack of detailed standards for student trustee policies, leaving the success or failure of student trusteeship dependant on the goodwill of individual school boards.

2. The government's commitment to its own policy is questionable.

The Ontario Ministry of Education and Training has not collected data regarding implementation of the student trustee policy, nor has it shown any intention of acting against isolated failures to abide by the new policy. Some school boards have not yet instituted student trusteeship or even a policy for next year. One board does not allow student representatives to participate in regular board meetings, even though the regulation indicates that they are entitled to the same participation rights as regular board members. The government has failed to respond to these contraventions of the legislation.

3. Many selection models reflect a lack of faith in the ability of youth.

Most of the 66 boards studied by the IOG fail to use a democratic board-wide selection process.⁴ In our society, few citizens would accept a system in which they had no input into the election of their "representative," yet this is the kind of system that in many cases is provided for students.

On 18 boards, the selection process is either completely or partially controlled by school staff, board staff, or trustees. In another 18 cases, there is no board-wide selection, meaning that candidates need not seek the support of students from outside their school.

Without a democratic selection process, student trustees lose legitimacy in the eyes of students. More importantly, cynicism about politics is reinforced. On the other hand, policies based on student election tend to increase awareness about the position, which encourages more students to compete for it, and also sets the stage for a better consultation process after the election.

4. Most school boards fail to provide orientation to their student trustees.

Across the province, many student trustees begin their terms without any training. They attend their first meeting understanding neither meeting procedure, the board jurisdiction, nor their own role, rights, and responsibilities. Student trustees often spend their first months learning how the board operates and are only able to play a meaningful role towards the end of their term.

5. Student trustees are often excluded from the debate and compromise that is part of decision-making.

Many student trustees feel that their participation in the decision-making process is limited to their formal role during public meetings. They feel that their input is not sought out informally when trustees discuss issues and seek support for their positions. This situation is aggravated by their exclusion from closed meetings and their non-voting status, which means that trustees never need their political support. Given their steep learning curve and the three-year cycle of the board, the shorter term of student trustees also makes their full participation difficult.

6. Most student trustees do not have adequate consultative mechanisms.

While many student trustees meet regularly with student council presidents, these meetings tend to be infrequent and not policy-focused. Part of the problem is that presidents are often more interested in local school policies than in broader education policy issues. On boards where the selection takes place only at the school level, there are no incentives for the student trustee to seek input beyond his or her own school. The situation is aggravated by a lack of co-ordination with student groups, which are in a position to provide fora for the gathering of student opinion.⁵

The **Institute On Governance (IOG)** is a non-profit organization founded in 1990 to promote effective governance. From our perspective, governance comprises the traditions, institutions and processes that determine how power is exercised, how citizens are given a voice, and how decisions are made on issues of public concern.

Our current activities fall within six broad themes: citizen participation, Aboriginal governance, building policy capacity, accountability and performance measurement, youth governance, and information and communications technology and governance.

In pursuing these themes, we work in Canada and internationally. We provide advice to public organizations on governance matters. We bring people together in a variety of settings, events and professional development activities to promote learning and dialogue on governance issues. We undertake policy-relevant research, and publish results in the form of policy briefs and research papers.

You will find additional information on our themes and current activities on our website, at <http://www.iog.ca>

Recommendations

Both policy-makers and youth must change the way they look at decision-making in education. In particular, they must re-think how young people can be involved. The following proposed reforms are a step in this direction:

1. **The Ontario government should amend its student trustee legislation in three key areas.** First, it should grant voting status to student trustees. Second, legislation should also allow for their participation in closed meetings, with certain exceptions.⁶ Third, standards should be established for the democratic selection and participation of student trustees. Boards should be monitored and these standards enforced.
2. **Representatives from the Government of Ontario, provincial student groups, and school board associations should form a provincial task force to develop a province-wide framework for student involvement in educational governance.** In particular, this framework would co-ordinate the efforts of student councils, student trustees, and provincial student groups in order to ensure communication and accountability. The current system is outdated and does not recognise the potential role of student trustees and student groups as a resource for students and decision-makers alike.
3. **The Government of Ontario and school boards across the province need to make a commitment to provide necessary funding for training and communication.** In particular, financial support should be provided to provincial student groups for the development of a student trustee orientation package, annual training, and communication between student councils, student trustees, and student associations.
4. **Boards should acknowledge the importance of student opinion by supporting initiatives to gather student input.** In addition, boards should record how student trustees would have voted on motions until legislative changes grant them full voting privileges. School boards need to recognise student participation as a resource rather than a threat.



Conclusion

In Ontario, with the amalgamation of school boards, a reduction in their responsibilities, and a cut in the salaries of trustees, many local school governance issues are being revisited. As the rights of parents are being re-affirmed, it is important to remember that policy-makers must be accountable not only to those who pay taxes, but also to those who are most directly affected by their decisions. In this light, those involved in educational governance need to re-evaluate the role of students and begin to recognise their value not as clients in a system, but rather as partners in decision-making.

For further information, contact Elder C. Marques at the Institute On Governance.

tel.: +1 (613) 562 0092 ext. 240

e-mail: emarques@iog.ca

- 1 John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, "Civics Is Not Enough: Teaching Barbarics in K-12," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 29, n. 1, March 1996; Claire Hackett, "Young People and Political Participation," in Jeremy Roche and Stanley Tucker, eds., *Youth in Society: Contemporary Theory, Policy and Practice* (London: SAGE, 1997); Stephen Earl Bennett, "Young Americans' Indifference to Media Coverage of Public Affairs," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 31, n. 3, September 1998 and "Why Young Americans Hate Politics and What We Should Do About It," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 30, n. 1, March 1997.
- 2 The only guidance that school boards were given with regards to student trustees was the legislation and its complementary Regulation 461/97.
- 3 Phillip Haid, Elder C. Marques, and Jon Brown, "Re-focusing the Lens: Assessing the Challenge of Youth Involvement in Public Policy," IOG, 1999. Available on the IOG website at <http://www.iog.ca>.
- 4 The IOG's "Re-focusing the Lens" includes a breakdown of selection models at the school and board levels on an individual board basis.
- 5 A notable exception is the case of the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (FESFO), which brought student trustees together with other student leaders at a conference in 1999.
- 6 In particular, exclusion from personnel discussions in which they would have a conflict of interest.

Institute On Governance, 122 Clarence St., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 5P6

Tel.: +1.613.562.0090 – Fax: +1.613.562.0097

e-mail: info@iog.ca – Website: <http://www.iog.ca>

News and Reviews

Australian-American Community Education Grants

The Australian-American Community Education Grants are made each year to Australian youth-oriented groups and secondary schools involved with people less than 20 years of age. The Grant is to enable an American educator to visit the host organisation in Australia in 2000. It includes a travel allowance of \$A3,000 and an allowance for incidental expenses of \$A500.

The closing date for applications is 30 September 1999.

Contact: Rachel Hammer, Administrative Assistant, Australian-American Educational Foundation: e-mail: <rachel@aaef.anu.edu.au>

Democracy Starts Here: Junior School Councils at Work

Descriptions and practical information about active citizenship in primary schools.

\$7 a copy (posted); \$12 for 2 copies

Order through **Connect**

1999 Human Rights Awards YOUTH MEDAL

**HERE IS YOUR CHANCE TO ACKNOWLEDGE
YOUNG PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN
YOUR COMMUNITY.**

The Australian Human Rights Medal and Awards were established in 1987 by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) to recognise those who have made a significant contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights and equal opportunity in Australia.

This year a Human Rights Youth Medal will be presented for the first time. Young people under the age of 26, or organisations largely co-ordinated by young people will be eligible.

For further information and nomination forms please contact HREOC on 02 9284 9675; via e-mail <paffairs@hreoc.gov.au> or download a form from our Website at: <http://www.hreoc.gov.au>

2nd Regional Conference on Student Tutoring and Mentoring

This conference will have a youth focus. The first conference concentrated mainly on tutoring and mentoring in schools and tertiary institutions, but this one is broadening the scope to include tutoring and mentoring in the community, industry and business.

Perth, September 30 - October 2, 1999

<http://about.murdoch.edu.au/star/conference/default.html>

STUDENT PARTICIPATION E-MAIL DISCUSSION GROUP

To join: Send an e-mail to: <majordomo@edna.edu.au>

saying (in the body of the message):
subscribe student-participation

... post topics for discussion ...

... make announcements ...

... ask questions ...

... share information and resources ...

Being Fair!

A Procedural Fairness Manual for Australian Schools

Being Fair, published by the National Children's and Youth Law Centre, gives decision-makers in Australian schools - both government and private - a model of how to incorporate the principles of natural justice when making decisions that affect young people.

"Seems to be one-sided, seems like the decision is already made and nothing you say is going to change it," says one 14 year-old boy interviewed by the NCYLC. "They didn't tell me anything about why I was asked to leave," says another 13 year-old girl.

Chair of the NCYLC, Moira Rayner, says that when decisions are being made that will have a long-term effect on young people's lives - such as suspension or expulsion - it is important that the young person has the opportunity to answer any charges against them and that the decision-maker acts without bias.

"It is a basic tenet of a democratic society that people will have the opportunity to tell their side of the story and decision-makers won't be arbitrary in making those decisions. Children and young people are no different to adults in expecting that decisions affecting their lives will be made fairly. A plain-English manual that explains the principles of natural justice and provides models for procedural fairness, will be a valuable resource to school decision-makers, teachers, parents and students."

Being Fair provides practical guidance to contemporary legal and administrative principles, while providing workable models that reflect the realities of the school environment. It also features easy-to-use checklists, alternative dispute resolution models and training exercises.

Being Fair was launched by Moira Rayner at Northland Secondary College (Victoria) in early August. The manual was funded by the Sidney Myer Fund, written by Damian Bartholomew and Jason Kidd (Youth Advocacy Centre) and edited by respected education law expert Dr Ann Shorten and Michael Antrum, previous NCYLC Director and Principal Solicitor.

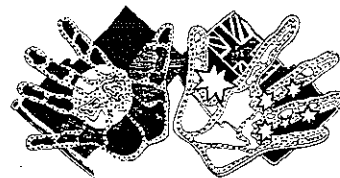
Copies of **Being Fair** are available from the NCYLC for \$20 each (plus \$1.50 postage and handling). Discounts are available on bulk purchases (20 copies or more).

Order from:

tel: (02) 9398 7488;

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THE SECOND

Forum for the Future

National Youth Reconciliation Convention

**Geelong Grammar School, Geelong
26 September - 2 October 1999**

The dream of young people for a national youth reconciliation convention came from students at Kormilda College, Darwin, in 1997. Their concern was that at national gatherings about reconciliation, young people were scarcely represented, yet the issues themselves were important to them for shaping the future of Australia.

The result was that the Kormilda students organised a Youth Reconciliation Convention in Darwin in 1997. One of the outcomes of this convention was a decision to hold a national reconciliation convention for young people in 1998 which the students themselves would organise and run. So, the 1998 Convention was planned by young people - for young people!

With the endorsement of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, the Kormilda STARS (Students That Action Reconciliation Seriously) hosted the very successful First National Youth Reconciliation Convention in July 1998. Three hundred students took part, from every State and Territory in the country. Dreams, culture, thoughts and friendships were shared. (See *Connect* 114, December 1998 for more details.)

Following the success of the Darwin Convention, Uniting Education (the national education agency of the Uniting Church) agreed to direct the 1999 Convention, setting up a new association and appointing a Project Officer.

The Project Officer is working with VicSTARS (Victorian Students That Action Reconciliation Seriously) and representatives of the Koori people to organise the convention. With the permission of the Wathaurong people, the convention will be held at Geelong Grammar School.

The convention is a working conference with keynote speakers, small group discussions, workshops and plenary sessions. The process will include times of listening, sharing, learning and reflecting on issues associated with Aboriginal reconciliation in Australia. Sessions will provide opportunities for young people to hear speakers from around Australia share on particular topics and take part in discussions led by the young people themselves. Adults will be welcome to be present during these sessions but to participate only when invited.

Further Information:

Paul Tolliday, Uniting Education,
PO Box 1245, Collingwood 3066

Phone: (03) 9416 4262; Fax: (03) 9416 4264

E-mail: youth.reconcil@uniting.org.au

1999 Young Leaders Forum

"Beyond Reality ... See It For Yourself"

The 1999 Young Leaders Forum has been developed with the theme: "Beyond Reality ... See It For Yourself", so that young people can develop their dreams and work towards a positive future.

The five-day residential program for young people is based around leadership, goal setting, self esteem and family issues.

The present rise in depression, bullying, assault, eating disorders, drug use and family breakdown is combated through the presentation of workshops, speakers, group work activities and small group discussions, which aim to teach strategies to increase self-esteem and communication skills. It is evident in dealing with young people and their families that these issues are crippling our future (eg Herald Sun article, Wednesday April 7th, 1999). This article tells us that heroin use has tripled in the past three years, that in 1997 youth suicide increased by 50%, that one in five young people are depressed, and that assaults are rising, as are serious crimes such as arson and robbery. This information is terrifying, and this is only the known cases: what happens to those young people who are not recognised by the statistic collectors? It is these types of rises that further enhances the need for a

forum for young people to express concerns and issues without feeling judged and ridiculed for what they believe. They are also allowed the space to grow and develop without feeling pressured to achieve.

The program was especially designed so that the participants can examine themselves and what they believe in, so that they can be inspired by what

they learn, and take this inspiration back to their homes and communities. We hope that the participants will leave the program understanding that leadership is not just about who can draw a crowd, but about being able to pursue visions, communicate ideas and listen effectively to others. While based around leadership and self esteem, it

isn't specifically a training course, but an opportunity to understand the values of leadership, and about finding the passion and conviction to pursue your vision.

Young people are playing a major role in the development and implementation of the 1999 Young Leaders Forum. They are included in the program development, fundraising, the presentation of the program and then the evaluation. Adult leaders are there as a support and to assist when asked; at present, there are 4-6 leaders involved. All leaders running groups are young people who have been involved in previous programs, and they have also participated in some smaller leadership programs which have given them skills to run small group discussions.

The young people are committed to teaching others about positive behaviour. Many of them have experience in areas

such as abuse, low self-esteem and addictions, and can therefore pass their personal experience on to others at the forum.

Participants come from all backgrounds. They are the young people who nobody wants to deal with, the achievers who 'stand out' at school, and the average teenager who nobody notices.

1999 Young Leaders Forum

Dates:

20-24 September 1999

Where:

A'Beckett Park
Raymond Island
East Gippsland
Victoria

How to get there:

own transport
(if you are getting public transport to
Bairnsdale, let us know)

Cost::

\$120 - this includes everything: food,
accommodation, program

Who:

anyone aged from 13 to 21 years;
participants are coming from various
states and places.

Places are limited: send registration as
soon as possible. (*If cash is a problem, let
me know.*)

Contact::

Liesel Collings
2/24 The Avenue
Morwell 3840
Phone: (03) 5135 3583;
e-mail: <liesel@b150.aone.net.au>

Clearinghouse

Local and Overseas Publications Received

Connect receives many publications directly or indirectly relevant to youth and student participation. We can't lend or sell these, but if you want to look at or use them, contact us on:

(03) 9489 9052 or (03) 9344 9637

Australian:

AYN: Eye of the Arabic Youth Network (Victorian Arabic Youth Network, Coburg, Vic) Winter 1999

Curriculum Perspectives (ACSA, Deakin West, ACT) Vol 19 No 2, June 1999

Education Links (Broadway, NSW) #58, Autumn 1999

Network News/YACVicBits (Ethnic Youth Issues Network and YACVic, Fitzroy, Vic) Vol 11 No 2, June 1999

Network News (Network of Community Activities, Surry Hills, NSW) June 1999

Other Ways (AERG, Chirnside Park, Vic) Issue 80, June 1999

RACV Energy Breakthrough Bulletin (Vic) Edition 2, July 1999

Rights Now (National Children and Youth Law Centre, NSW) July 1999

Starlink (VUT, Vic) Issue 36, April-May 1999

Youth Issues Forum (YACVic, Fitzroy, Vic) Winter 1999

Youth Studies Australia (ACYS, Hobart, Tas) Vol 18 No 2, June 1999

International:

Communication Research Trends (Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture, St Louis, USA) Vol 18 (1998) Nos 4

Democracy and Education (IDE, Athens, Ohio, USA) Vol 13, No 1, Spring 1999

Education Now (Nottingham, UK) No 24, Summer 1999

Education Revolution (AERO, New York, USA) #27, Summer 1999

National Coalition News (NCACS, Ann Arbor, USA) Vol 24, No 2, Summer 1999

Resource Catalog 1999-2000 (NASSP, Virginia, USA)

**STUDENT PARTICIPATION
SUPPORT MATERIALS**

AVAILABLE

**See the back page of this issue
of *Connect***



Documents

The documents listed in this column are of general background value. A photocopy is available for research purposes. The length and cost (to cover copying and postage) is listed. Please order by code number.

A full, computerised index of these documents is now available from **Connect** for \$3; this can be accessed and printed by topic, key-word etc or simply sequentially.

Code Description/Pages/Cost

- 459 Second National Youth Reconciliation Convention: Information Sheet and Objectives** (Uniting Education and VicSTARS) (3 pp; \$0.50)
- 460 Paralowie R-12 School: Student Forum: Student Participation Rationale** (Paralowie R-12 School, SA) (5 pp; \$0.90)
- 461 Civics and Citizenship Education Grants Schools: Newsletter 1** (Victorian Department of Education and Youth Research Centre, Vic) (8 pp; \$1.20)

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- **Cross-referenced index to contents of *Connect* back issues** (\$3)

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Miscellaneous Resources:

- **Students and Work** - 1985 *Connect* reprint booklet #5 (\$5)
- 'Youth Radio' issue of 3CR's **CRAM Guide** (1985) (\$1)
- **Democratic Decision Making in Schools** - Victorian PEP (1987) (\$3)
- **Democracy Starts Here! Junior School Councils at Work** (1996) (\$7 or \$12 for two copies)

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Foxfire Resources:

- **Sometimes a Shining Moment** (Wigginton) (\$25)
- **Foxfire: 25 Years** (Doubleday) (\$25)
- **A Foxfire Christmas** (Doubleday hardcover) (\$25)
- **Shining Moments** - *Foxfire* video (1 hour) (loan for 1 week: \$5)

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